THE CASES

Mikan Gensic

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

- 1 Peter 3:15

All citations of Scripture are from the NASB1995. Indicators of references to footnotes have been removed for readability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. FOR THEISM 3
2. FOR CHRISTIANITY 6
3. FOR PROTESTANTISM 10
4. FOR TRADITIONALISM 14
5. FOR DEVOUTNESS 15
SOURCES 16

1. FOR THEISM

1. CAUSALITY

Everything in our plane of existence is caused by something else. This includes the universe. Modern science tells us that the universe most likely was formed from the Big Bang. This, however, poses us another question: what caused the Big Bang? Space and time are in continuum, which means that they came into existence at the same time. Whether or not space and time began when our universe was created or if space and time have been in existence beforehand due to the existence of other universes is not of concern. The question could either be what caused the Big Bang or what created our plane of existence, yet the premise still stays the same.

Since space and time came into existence at the same time, whatever thing or being that created our plane of existence must be immaterial and outside of time, while being capable of creating our entire universe (or other universes, if they exist). That being is God. The line of causality must start somewhere, and by definition, God is the start of every line of causality in the history of everything. He is the uncaused causer.

By claiming that everything came from nothing, the atheist rejects one of the most basic principles of reality itself. He or she claims to believe in science, yet “the basic condition underlying the entire dimension of scientific research is the firm belief in the causal inevitability of natural phenomena” (Regopoulos). Denying the existence of a higher power that at the very least created the universe is denying causality.

2. FINE-TUNING

“Both the fundamental constants that describe the laws of physics and the cosmological parameters that determine the properties of our universe must fall within a range of values in order for the cosmos to develop astrophysical structures and ultimately support life (Adams). Changes in these forces would be very catastrophic, one example being if “the strong nuclear force were somewhat weaker, then the deuterium nucleus would no longer be bound. If the strong force were somewhat stronger, then diprotons would be bound” (Adams).

It is also very important to understand just how specific these universal constants need to be, one example being the cosmological constant, which “must be fine-tuned to something like 1 part in 10^120. If it were just slightly more positive, the universe would fly apart; slightly negative, and the universe would collapse” (Richards).

The odds of all of these constants being within the ranges they need to be in order to sustain everything in the universe is so ridiculously small that there is practically no way it

could have happened by chance. Something or someone must have set the values to be just the right ones to sustain everything. That someone is God.

3. ATHEISTIC MIRACLES

The atheist claims to not believe in miracles, yet there are some miracles one must believe in to be atheist. These beliefs come as a result of rejecting a higher power existing as a cause for our existence and morality, and they are the following.

Something came from nothing. This one is very self-explanatory.

Order came from chaos. All of the systems of the universe contain very large numbers of individual parts that all work together, which is order, not chaos. “If I took all of the individual parts of an airplane like a 737 and dropped them from a few hundred feet in the air, how many attempts would it take for those parts to fall in just the right way to assemble that aircraft ready to fly? I would argue that it would never happen no matter how many billions of attempts or millions of years in the effort. In contrast, a typical human cell is estimated to contain around 1 to 3 billion protein molecules that must fit together and function perfectly. That’s more than a thousand times as many proteins as there are parts in that jetliner” (Stevens).

Life came from non-life. We have only observed life come from other life. Life is so vastly different from non-life in terms of its nature that non-life could have not possibly breathed something it did not have into itself to create life. God breathed the life into life.

The personal comes from the non-personal. When someone physically dies, their body is still there, yet what sustained them is not. There are no chemical formulas for immaterial concepts because they are immaterial. What sustained them, then, must be some sort of immaterial soul, yet where could this come from? The personal can only come from other personal, therefore there must be some first personal being to give personality to the non-personal. That being is God.

Morality came from matter. How do we know the difference between right and wrong? Good and evil? “Just being a good person” falls apart, because how do we define “good”? Without some authority or power to declare what is good and evil, good and evil are entirely subjective. There are many hate/extremist groups that claim discrimination based on sexual orientation, religion, disability, political party affiliation, et cetera is good, yet who has the say as to whether or not they are actually good? People have different ideas of what is good and what is evil. For there to truly be objective morality, it must come from some thing or being with morals. We cannot invent morality ourselves without it being merely subjective, and therefore inaccurate. Objective morality cannot come from mere material imperfect beings like us, it must come from something or someone who is perfect, and that someone is God.

4. ONE TRUE FAITH

If aliens do exist (which they very likely do), they would not disprove religion as a whole. All of the world's religions are extremely human-centric in the sense that their prophets were human and their holy books were written by humans. However, if God revealed Himself to us, why would He not reveal Himself to extraterrestrial life? Intelligent aliens would definitely have their own religions, and they very much may have one of ours if God revealed Himself to other worlds, likely through prophecy.

I say "one of ours" because God would only reveal one correct religion to all the life in the universe. He would not let people be deceived by contrary faiths. If God has revealed Himself to aliens, it would be through one religion, while any others are either offshoots or failed attempts to explain metaphysics. The same goes for us humans. God would not let His message be drowned in obscurity by revealing multiple faiths to us. All faiths except one are, once again, either offshoots or failed attempts to explain metaphysics.

5. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

God created us, knowing we were going to sin against Him. He could have made us incapable is sinning, but He did not, because love cannot be forced, and by being unable to sin we would be forced to "love" Him.

God could absolutely remove all the evil from the world, yet He chooses not to because by doing so, we would be no more. He can take the evil out of us, but once again, love is not forced.

God, being all-loving, does not send anyone to heaven or hell. We send ourselves wherever we send ourselves after we die based on whether or not we have faith in Him or at least truly try to seek Him out (if we have limited knowledge of Him).

God is absolutely capable of stopping someone from sending themselves to hell, but He wouldn't want to force someone to be with Him in heaven if they weren't following Him or seeking Him out on earth.

2. FOR CHRISTIANITY

1. THE BIBLE

Once the authoritativeness of the Bible is proven, all else follows. The Bible as we know it today was written by over 40 authors over the span of 1,500 years, all coming together to tell one collective, coherent tale of how God made us, we messed up, He saved us, and we are waiting for His return. Because of this, there is a lot of historical context needed to understand many parts of Scripture. The messages of Scripture are twisted when one interprets Scripture through a very literal lens, without understanding what a verse really means (Psalm 17:8, John 6:35, John 10:9, Galatians 4:21-31).

The thing about the events of Scripture is that they can be verifiably placed in world history. They aren't things that people just make up (like the splitting of the moon) and slap a "God told me so" label on it.

"The Bible makes very bold claims for itself as it does in fact profess to be from the mind of the One True and Living God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Jeremiah 1:9; Malachi 1:1; et. al.). But simply to claim inspiration does not make it so" (Warren). In Bart Warren's analysis of Thomas B. Warren's argument for the divine inspiration of Scripture, he poses five "questions regarding supernatural revelation" (Warren), them being the following.

First, would God want to reveal Himself? "God is part of a loving community and is desirous of fellowship (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus 29:45; 2 Samuel 7:24; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; et al.). Certainly God would desire to communicate with those He has created and loves" (Warren).

Second, can He reveal Himself? Well, he's God, so by definition, He can do anything, including revealing Himself to us.

Third, is it necessary for God to reveal Himself? We can know of His existence and attributes through logic and reasoning (Romans 1:20), so there is no excuse to be atheist. Yet we cannot know much more than that without Him revealing more about Himself to us.

Fourth, how has God revealed Himself to us? "In times past, God revealed Himself via prophets and even His Son, Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2; John 14:9; et al.). However, He has since chosen an objective and permanent method of communication: the written word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21)" (Warren).

Fifth, how do we know which writings are divinely inspired by God? "How could one book be seen as divine and another as merely human since many books claim to be from God? It

must be agreed that there are certain necessary and sufficient characteristics of a divine document" (Warren).

Yet this all seems like circular reasoning until we bring in all the predictive prophecy found in the Old Testament. Warren lists seven predictive prophecies that came true in real history, those being the following.

One, "Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon shall destroy the mainland portion of Tyre (Ezekiel 26:7-8). Nebuchadnezzar II laid siege to Tyre for thirteen years beginning in 585/6 BC" (Warren).

Two, "other nations are to participate in the fulfillment of the prophecy (Ezekiel 26:3). Alexander the Great besieged and captured the port in 332 BC, and Ptolemies, Seleucids, Romans, and Muslim Arabs all had their turn at rule" (Warren).

Three, "the city is to be flattened, like the top of a rock (Ezekiel 26:4, 14). Alexander used the building materials of the mainland city, and any other rocks and soil in the immediate vicinity, to build a causeway to the island" (Warren).

Four, "it is to become a place for the spreading of nets (Ezekiel 26:5, 14). The waters around Tyre were renowned in ancient times for their fishing. This was all the fame the city could claim after its complete decimation by Alexander" (Warren).

Five, "its stones and timbers are to be laid in the sea (Ezekiel 26:12). As noted in number 3 above, the building of the causeway came from the remains of the mainland city" (Warren).

Six, "other cities are to fear greatly at the fall of Tyre (Ezekiel 26:15-18). Many fortified cities in the region capitulated to Alexander after they saw the genius and relative ease with which he captured Tyre" (Warren).

Seven, "the city will not be inhabited or rebuilt (Ezekiel 26:20-21). Alexander sold almost all of Tyre's inhabitants into slavery, and the city forever lost its importance on the world stage" (Warren).

Warren says that "Peter Stoner and Robert Newman calculated the mathematical probabilities for these seven predictions. The chance that all seven would prove to be correct is 1 in 75,000,000. Considering the divine judgment upon Tyre and the accuracy of Ezekiel's prophecy, this is an historical event that can be explained solely on the basis of supernatural influence. The prophecy concerning Tyre is simply the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Other nations such as Babylon were predicted to fall. The Old Testament is replete with what is known as messianic prophecies. The New Testament records their fulfillment. The biblical record is impressive" (Warren). A one in seventy-five million chance of happening randomly and the predictions not being divinely inspired is so absurdly small, and that's just about Tyre.

This one in seventy-five million only concerns eight prophecies. We see from the Old to the New Testaments that Jesus has fulfilled all of the Messianic prophecies (except for the ones about His return, which will happen at a date and time no one knows), and as there are way more than just eight Messianic prophecies, the odds of Him fulfilling all of them are much,

much smaller, as “he fulfilled more than 324 individual prophecies that related to the Messiah” (Bernis). 324 is way larger than eight. For all practical purposes, the odds of someone randomly or accidentally fulfilling all those prophecies is zero. There cannot be any realistic way that the biblical prophets could have made their predictions without divine inspiration and assistance.

2. ONE GOD

If there were to be multiple gods, their powers may be more specialized, thus they are not all-powerful and not God. Multiple deities may have conflicting domains and wills, fragmenting what otherwise would have been one united worldview. By definition, God must be supreme and independent. One God, not multiple. There cannot be multiple deities operating at the same level as what God is at, as that compromises the very definition of God. Through logic and reasoning we can know there is only one God.

Scripture makes this very clear where it is written that “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:2-3). Not “we are”, “I am”. One, not multiple.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not one that can be easily thought up using logic and reasoning, as there are many prophecies Jesus fulfilled. It requires revelation, and that revelation that we have been given is Scripture.

3. THREE PERSONS

“Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.”

The first two sentences of the Athanasian Creed make it very clear that one cannot call themselves a Christian unless they adhere to the catholic faith. Not Catholic, catholic. There is a difference. Catholic refers to the faith and beliefs of the Catholic Church, while catholic simply means universal. We know this faith, the bare minimum of what one must believe to be a Christian, because it is backed up by Scripture, not just because a creed says so.

To summarize what the Athanasian Creed says in regards to the three-ness of God and the nature of Jesus Christ, there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) in three persons (Matthew 28:19), the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is God (John 6:27), the Son is God (John 1:1, John 1:14, Romans 9:5, Colossians 2:9), and the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). The Father is not the Son (Luke 22:42, John 17:1), the Son is not the Spirit (Galatians 4:6), and the Spirit is not the Father (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). All three persons of the Godhead are distinct, co-equal (1 Corinthians 12:11), and co-eternal (John 1:1, Revelation 1:8). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) and the Son (John 16:7). Note that Eastern Christianity does not believe that the Spirit proceeds from the Son. Western Christianity believes that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, but non-Catholics disapprove of how *filioque* (Latin for “and the Son”) was added to the Nicene Creed. This is

the only such exception needed to be made within the Athanasian Creed. Jesus is fully God and fully man (Matthew 1:23, Galatians 4:4).

4. THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

God created man and woman in His image and likeness, giving them authority over the earth (Genesis 1:26-27). However, we are not perfect (Romans 3:23) and cannot live up to God's standards all the time. Because we have separated ourselves from God, we deserve death (Romans 6:23), but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, paid that price for our sins. He was born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38), and as He lived out His life, He was the human embodiment of perfection (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:22, Hebrews 4:15, 1 John 3:5) and never sinned. He taught us to love Him and our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39), explaining how to do so along the way.

Jesus was crucified for us under the order of Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:24-26, Mark 15:15, John 19:16). He died on the cross (John 19:31, Psalm 22:16-18) and resurrected two days later, staying on earth for some time before ascending into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Ever since then, He has been in heaven and will return for His Second Coming which will happen on a day that no one knows (Matthew 24:35-37). When Jesus comes back, He will judge all of humanity. Those who have spent their lives living for and following Him will live with Him forever, while those who choose to reject Him will be separated from Him forever (Matthew 25:31-32, 2 Timothy 4:1, 2 Corinthians 5:10). Those who never hear the Gospel can still be saved (Romans 2:1-20) if they truly seek God despite limited knowledge of Him.

3. FOR PROTESTANTISM

1. THE ROCK AND KEYS

“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven’” (Matthew 16:18-19).

In verse 18, Jesus says “this rock”, not “you”. He is not declaring Peter as the rock. If He was, then He would say something along the lines of “upon you I will build My church”. This leaves the question of what Jesus means by “this rock”, which has already been answered two verses prior, when “Peter responds for the Twelve: Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, God the Son incarnate” (Allison) two verses prior. “The rock” is referring to Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Son of God, which is the cornerstone of the gathering of and for Christ Jesus. He is enforcing Peter’s confession to be believed by the whole of His Church.

We see in verse 19 that Jesus is giving Peter the authority to bind doctrine that has already been bound in heaven and loose doctrine that has already been loosed in heaven, hence the “shall have been bound” and “shall have been loosed”. Peter, nor any of the priests, pastors, and elders as his successors, do not have the authority to enforce doctrine outside of what is enforced in heaven.

2. MEDIATORHOOD

“For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus is the sole mediator between us and the Father. We should not be asking any of the saints for intercession, because it adds in an additional mediator that is blatantly forbidden from being a mediator.

“Neither Mary nor the saints are omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent. This means that the saints, nor Mary, can know our thoughts, hear our prayers or have the power to grant us spiritual protections, graces and peace (all of which are explicity *[sic]* asked of Mary and Saints in the countless Roman prayers offered to them)” (Kannard). If the saints could do such things, then they would share qualities of God that makes God, well, God. And if there are beings other than God that share the qualities of God, then God isn’t really God.

Also because Jesus is the sole mediator between us and the Father, we should not confess our sins to a priest or pastor. By going to a priest or pastor to get sins forgiven, one is using him as an unnecessary mediator when only Jesus mediates for us. There is no need for any additional mediators between us and God when we pray. We all have direct access to Him.

3. SOLA SCRIPTURA

“Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other” (1 Corinthians 4:6). This is a clear biblical order to “not to exceed what is written”. “What is written” is Scripture. A similar sentiment is expressed when it is written that "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Verse 17 says that “the man of God may be […] equipped for every good work” by Scripture. God and His Word are sufficient for man to be able to do “every good work”, not some or most good works.

This does not mean we must disregard tradition. In fact, when tradition does not contradict Scripture, it can be authoritative, as the Bible commands us to “stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). “Us”, in this context, is referring to the writers of the New Testament letters. Jesus Himself, however, had to condemn the Pharisees’ elevation of traditions above His written commandments when He asked them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?” (Matthew 15:3)

Nowhere in Scripture does it say anything along the lines of “do not exceed tradition”, also. The forbidding of exceeding is reserved for what is written, or Scripture.

4. HOLY COMMUNION

“While they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:26-28). The Body and Blood of Jesus are very much present in the Eucharist, as Jesus Himself is saying that “this is My body” and “this is My blood”.

However, the bread and wine used as part of the Eucharist during church services still remain bread and wine physically, as we see in verse 29, Jesus still refers to the wine as “the fruit of the vine”. Transubstantiation does not occur, as Jesus still calls the wine, well, wine, as the wine is, by the process in which it Is created, quite literally “the fruit of the vine”.

5. SOTERIOLOGY

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are saved first and foremost by the grace of God and His saving work trough His life, death, resurrection, and ascension (Titus 3:5) through our faith in Him alone. Works are necessary fruits of faith (James 2:17), but they do not justify someone before God.

John 3:16 says that “for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” To believe, in this context, means to have faith, as “the demons also believe” (James 2:19). There are not other requirements laid out.

6. CHRIST’S ATONEMENT

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus substituted us for Him so He could pay the price for our sins, as is stated in Isaiah 53:4-8 (“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?”), Mark 10:45 (“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”), 2 Corinthians 5:21 (“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”), Galatians 3:13 (“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’”), 1 Peter 2:24 (“and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed”), and 1 Peter 3:18 (“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit”). This is penal substitutionary atonement, the idea that Jesus took the place we deserved to be in to save us.

7. THE BIBLICAL CANON

“The Jews never considered [the Apocrypha] as part of the Hebrew Scriptures. They believed that there was, throughout that period, no voice of the prophets in Israel” (Edwards). The deuterocanonical books were written after the Old Testament was written, in a time that “prophets ceased to appear among them” (1 Maccabees 9:27 RSVCE).

Around this time also, “the Jews and their priests decided that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise” (1 Maccabees 14:41 RSVCE). This verse also indicates the lack of prophets going around at the time between the writing of Malachi, around 430 BC (Edwards) and the life of Jesus.

As the deuterocanonical books were not written during a time in which there were not true prophets and those qualified to write them, they cannot be considered divinely inspired the same way the 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament books can.

8. PURGATORY

“Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come” (Matthew 12:32). When Jesus says this, He outlines two distinct ages. The use of the word “the” in “the age to come” implies that this next age is the other age, with the ages being separated by Jesus’ Second Coming. “This age” is the time before the Second Coming, and “the age to come” is eternity afterwards.

Purgatory cannot be considered as “the age to come” being referenced here because it is not the only other age, as eternity with or without God still exists regardless as another age.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

God commands us to “not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:6). What is commanded of Him is found in Scripture. With the conclusion of Revelation, revelation has concluded, as “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18).

It is written in Jude that the Christian faith has been “once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3), not many times, once. The faith was finalized “once for all”. Since Scripture does not change, doctrine does not change. Any and all valid doctrine is already backed up by what is written.

4. FOR TRADITIONALISM

1. PASTORHOOD

Jesus only chose men to be His apostles (Luke 6:12-16). The Church today does not have the authority to ignore that precedent (1 Corinthians 11:2), which is why only men can be pastors/priests.

Paul also states that “an overseer, then, must be […] the husband of one wife“ (1 Timothy 3:2), clearly indicating that only men can hold the higher positions of church authority. This does not mean that women are incapable of doing so, as “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Women would be just as able to serve as pastors just as much as men can, except that Jesus didn’t ordain women, and neither should the Church.

2. SEXUALITY AND GENDER IDENTITY

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error” (Romans 1:26-27). Here we see that Paul considers acting upon same-sex attraction to be an error and unnatural, contrary to what God intended sex to be. It is written that "a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24), using the language of “man” and “wife” to indicate that “becom[ing] one flesh” through marriage is exclusive to one man and one woman.

It is also written that “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27), affirming the natural male-female binary. Identifying oneself outside of what God has beautifully created violates this binary.

Transitioning from one side of the binary to the other is not acceptable, as “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). The gender God assigns someone is very good is what he made for them, as it is assigned to them by God.

5. FOR DEVOUTNESS

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF SERIOUS FAITH

Jesus once said that if anyone desires to be a disciple of His, they “must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matthew 18:24). In the Our Father, we pray that “[the Father’s] will be done” (Matthew 6:10), not the will of us or our neighbors, but instead that of the Father. What He wants can oftentimes be contradictory to what we want. God likely doesn’t want you to eat your fifth bag of Cheetos in one sitting.

It is also written that “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Revelation 3:15-17). Being “lukewarm” is detestable. The lukewarm “Christian” concerns themself with the things of this world, like acquiring wealth (which isn’t inherently evil as long as it doesn’t become more of priority than God), yet their efforts are futile without God at the center of their life.

Jesus also said that “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matthew 7:21-23). One can say they believe, but it means nothing if they do not follow God’s commands and teachings, as faith is what saves, not belief. Belief is a prerequisite to faith, but it means nothing without faith.

SOURCES

ACCESSED MAY 27, 2026:

https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/mnsc.12.8.C135
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0370157319300511
https://www.discovery.org/a/fine-tuning-parameters/

ACCESSED MAY 28, 2026:

https://springschurchofchrist.com/articles/2025/08/10/six-miracles
https://www.biblegateway.com/

ACCESSED MAY 29, 2026:

https://warrenapologetics.org/sufficientevidence/2018/7/5/thomas-b-warrens-basic-argument-for-the-inspiration-of-the-bible
https://firmisrael.org/learn/how-many-messianic-prophecies-did-jesus-fulfill/
https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-does-this-rock-refer-to-matthew-1618/

ACCESSED MAY 30, 2026:

https://www.reformandainitiative.org/resources/why-praying-to-the-saints-is-not-like-asking-for-prayer-from-friends
https://answersingenesis.org/the-word-of-god/why-66/?srsltid=AfmBOooNZmZS9xP0-hUGqXhsYBx7vTlewtvxqSP5gO0mQON_zbtDu89j